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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN
18 SEPT 1972

01 OF 01

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Central Intelligence Bulletin

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(VIETNAM: Heavy fighting is under way in coastal Quang Ngai Province following a series of widespread Communist attacks over the weekend. The main enemy effort is against the Mo Duc and Ba To district capitals; several government strong-points also have been either surrounded or captured. A key bridge on Route 1 north of Mo Duc has fallen to the enemy, blocking government efforts to move in reinforcements. Bad weather is hampering allied air support.

The attacks may be the start of a major Communist effort against the coastal lowlands. [REDACTED] local enemy forces in Quang Ngai were ordered to conduct a two-week "highpoint" of activity starting on 15 September. A prisoner recently captured near Que Son claimed that the North Vietnamese 711th Division would "coordinate" its campaign against the coastal areas of Quang Nam and Quang Tin provinces with a similar effort to be mounted by the North Vietnamese 2nd Division in Quang Ngai.

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Farther north in Quang Tri City, sporadic fighting continues as South Vietnamese Marines mop up enemy troops still scattered throughout the citadel. The Marines occupied the former provincial headquarters west of the fortress on 16 September. South Vietnamese Ranger units are encountering determined Communist resistance north of the city, but only light action occurred to the south.

Fighting in the southern provinces remains focused on the lower delta provinces of Chuong Thien and Kien Giang. The Communists have harassed or attacked some 27 outposts in Chuong Thien Province during the past week. Although most of these actions were light, they do suggest heightened enemy logistic and infiltration activity, possibly in preparation for major attacks. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM)

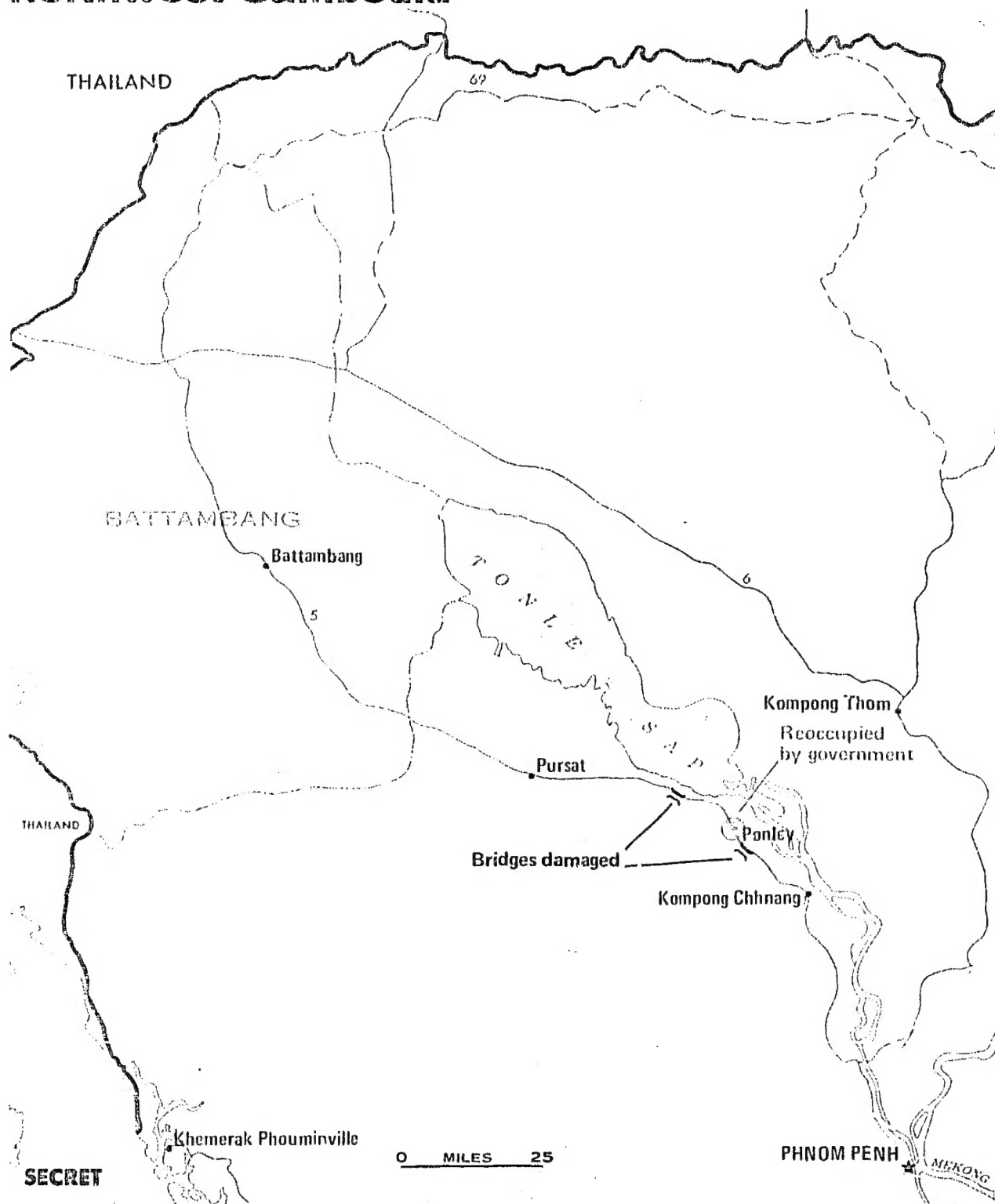
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Northwest Cambodia



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CAMBODIA: Government forces have regained control of Route 5.

Cambodian Army troops ended the Communists' month-long hold over the highway when they moved unopposed into the partially destroyed town of Ponley on 16 September. Government units encountered only token enemy resistance during the course of their six-day advance along the road. As they withdrew from the Ponley area, Communist elements destroyed or damaged several key bridges on Route 5--which will take about a week to repair.

Once the repairs are completed, regular government truck convoys will resume the movement of rice from Battambang Province to Phnom Penh. Until then, however, the government will continue to depend on emergency deliveries of rice from South Vietnam and Thailand to maintain Phnom Penh's stocks. The capital's rice reserves were considerably increased over the weekend with the delivery of 4,000 tons from South Vietnam via a special Mekong River convoy. (SECRET)

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0 10 Miles

○ Government-held location
● Communist-held location
△ Highpoint

Bouam Long

Nong Pei

71 77 74 7 4/7

Muong Soui

Phou Keng

Phou Thien

Nam Ngoum

Irregulars retreat

PLAINE DES JARRES

78 74 51 5 4

Phou Seu

Irregular task force

Than Heup

Ban Na

Phou Houang

Khang Kho

Phou Pha Sai

Irregular task force

Tha Tam Bleung

Sam Thong

Skyline Ridge

Long Tieng

Pha Dong

Nam Ngoum

Xieng Khouangville

CONFIDENTIAL

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LAOS: The Communists continue to offer strong resistance to government forces in north Laos.

North Vietnamese troops this weekend launched a series of ground attacks and shellings against government forces attempting to advance along the western edge of the Plaine des Jarres. A four-battalion irregular force that had been pushing toward the hills north of the Plaine was forced to retreat to its starting point. Other North Vietnamese troops attacked four irregular battalions near the southwestern edge of the Plaine, but, assisted by effective air strikes, these government troops held their ground.

The Communists are also maintaining pressure on Vang Pao's troops south of the Plaine. Elements of an irregular task force southwest of the Plaine briefly captured a hill near Tha Tam Bleung, but retreated after sustained shelling and ground fighting. The irregular task force in the Khang Kho area was stymied by enemy attacks. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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LEBANON-ISRAEL: The Israeli operation into Lebanon has prompted a move by Beirut to crack down on the fedayeen, an action which could lead to a clash between the fedayeen and the Lebanese Army.

Early yesterday the fedayeen were ordered from their strongholds in the Mount Hermon area in southern Lebanon and from the al-Biqa area in north central Lebanon. Only certain elements will be allowed to carry arms outside of refugee camps. In addition, the commandos have been ordered to evacuate all villages and have been prohibited from wearing uniforms. The Lebanese deputy chief of staff told US officials in Beirut that any resistance would be met by force and that as soon as the Lebanese Army can regroup, the plan would be put into effect.

The Palestine Liberation Organization radio in Damascus quickly rejected the ultimatum. The broadcast stated that "our rebels will never surrender an inch of Lebanese territory, as it belongs to the Arab nation."

The Lebanese Government has not had a good record in enforcing restrictions on the fedayeen, partly for internal political reasons and partly because of the support the fedayeen have received from other Arab countries. In any event, the army's ability to suppress the fedayeen completely is doubtful. Failure to take action against the fedayeen, however, will most likely result in new Israeli incursions.

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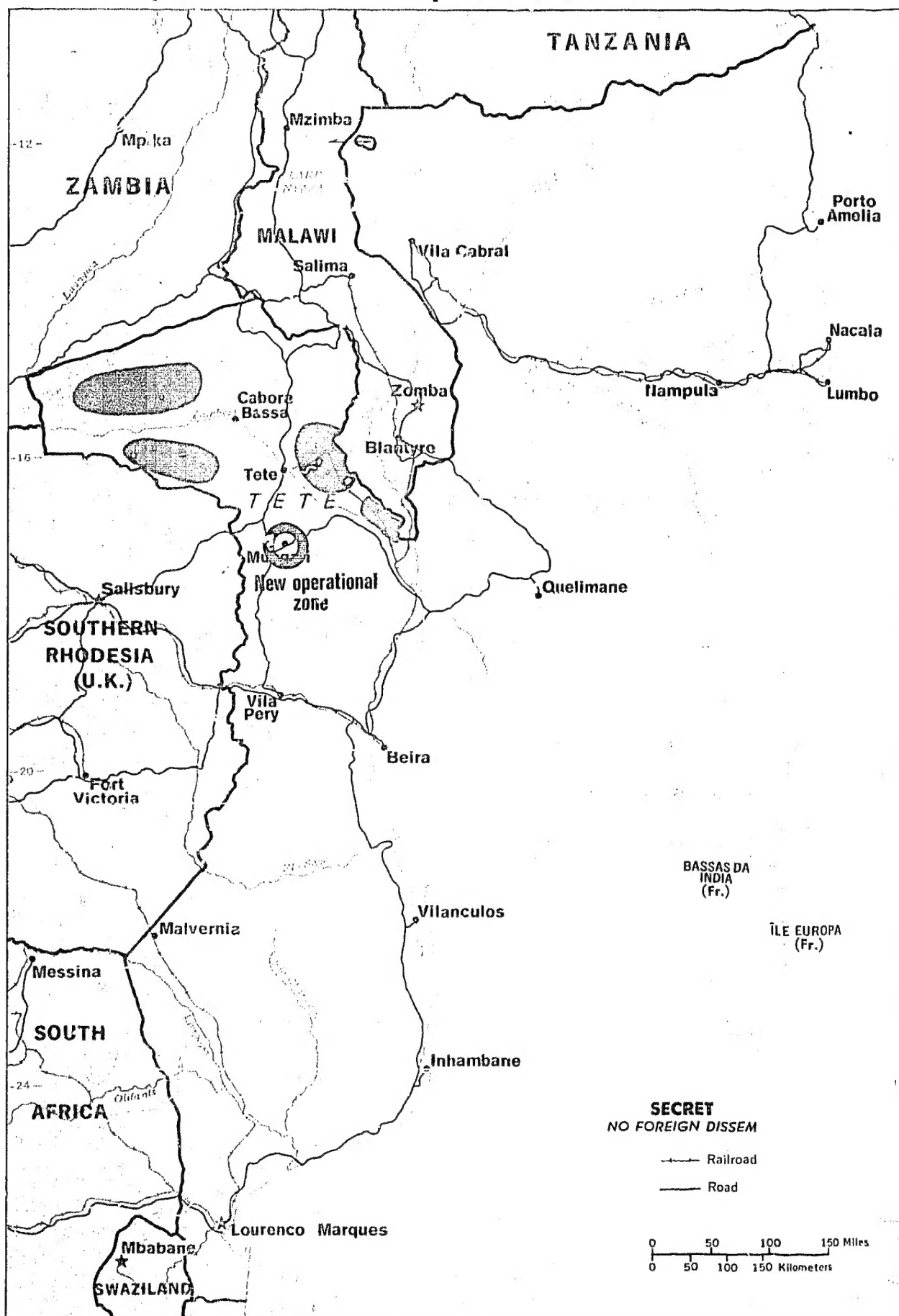
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AFGHANISTAN: Internal distribution problems could produce famine conditions in some remote areas this winter.

The US Embassy in Kabul estimates that at least one third of the approximately 650,000 inhabitants of isolated mountain regions of central and western Afghanistan are destitute and, unless the government acts quickly, they will be without food this winter. Severe weather conditions last winter, following two consecutive years of drought, forced the population in those areas to consume virtually the entire supply of seed and to slaughter almost all their sheep. As a result, summer crops were extremely small and animal products are in short supply.

A major logistic effort will be necessary to move an estimated 30,000 tons of wheat to stricken areas in the three months remaining before mountain passes are closed for the winter. Domestic transport facilities are inadequate, however, and some foreign transport assistance will be necessary if starvation is to be avoided.

The Afghan Government has decided to place a "strong man" in charge of the overall problem and make the army's chief of logistics responsible for transport. Similar efforts in the past, however, have been hindered by corruption and inefficiency in the Afghan administration. (CONFIDENTIAL)



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MOZAMBIQUE: The Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) has extended its guerrilla operations deeper into northwestern Mozambique.

Approximately 90 FRELIMO guerrillas infiltrated the Mungari area in southern Tete district last month, according to recent Portuguese military communiqués. The force dispersed into small squads that now are presumably located along the Tete - Vila Pery - Beira district borders. This is the first time that FRELIMO has tried to establish a permanent zone of operations in this area.

The Portuguese say they have isolated the area and are conducting sweep-and-clear operations. The latest military communiqué claims more than 15 rebels have been killed or captured, but it warns that isolated insurgent actions may still occur. Moreover, the Portuguese counterinsurgency forces are unlikely to dislodge the guerrillas unless they show increased willingness to get off the roads and pursue the rebels through the bush.

In the coming weeks, FRELIMO is likely to increase both its operations and its claims of success in anticipation of the eighth anniversary on 25 September of its military operations in Mozambique. The nationalists already have announced the formation of the new front in the Mungari area. The group also probably will cite its continuing ability to attack major transport routes in Tete leading to the massive Cabora Bassa hydroelectric project now under construction. Over the past year, FRELIMO has successfully harassed the dam's access routes, despite increased Portuguese counterinsurgency measures. Thus far the rebels have been unable to delay construction significantly, but they have increased the human and materiel cost of the project. (SECRET)

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UGANDA: (A rebel force composed of Tanzanian-based Ugandans opposed to President Amin has launched an attack in an apparent attempt to exploit the deteriorating internal security situation. The rebels are evidently led by supporters of former president Milton Obote, who has resided in Tanzania since being overthrown by Amin in 1971. The invading force has scored initial success in heavy fighting with the Ugandan Army, which has been seriously weakened in recent weeks by intertribal fighting. Serious clashes have occurred 80 miles southwest of the capital, and Uganda radio reports the rebels have captured three villages.) The invasion will worsen the precarious position of foreigners--including 1,000 Americans--whose safety was already in doubt because of a series of recent xenophobic statements and actions by Amin, and by the government's failure to ensure their safety. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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